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1 IN RE: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
2 COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION LISTENING SESSION  
3

Transcript of the Cooperative Conservation Listening Session

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5 commencing at 1:04 p.m., on the 21 day of September 2006, at  
6 Southeast Georgia Conference Center, Coastal Georgia Community  
7 College, 3700 Altama Avenue, Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia.  
8  
9

10 APPEARANCES:

11

MODERATOR: MR. JON MARSHALL  
DJ Case & Associates

12

13 PANELISTS: MR. DALE HALL  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
14 Service

14

15 ADMIRAL CONRAD LAUTENBACHER  
Administrator NOAA

16

COURT REPORTER: ADVANCED VERBATIM REPORTING  
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1 MR. MARSHALL: Welcome to the 20th of 24 listings  
2 sessions on cooperative conservation. My name is Jon  
3 Marshall. I am the Moderator for today's session. I am  
4 joined on the stage by Dale Hall, Director of the U.S. Fish  
5 and Wildlife Service; and Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, NOAA  
6 Administrator. He is the Administrator for the National  
7 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Under Secretary  
8 of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. To the right I am  
9 joined by Court Reporter Steve Walker; and Sign Language  
10 Interpreters Allison Steele and Karen Holmes.

11

To start off today, I am honored to introduce  
12 Oglethorpe Point Elementary Chorus, led by Mrs. Donna  
13 Proctor. Please stand and join as they lead us in our  
14 National Anthem.

14

(National Anthem)

15

16 ("Recycle Rap" -- sung by Oglethorpe Elementary Chorus)  
17 MR. MARSHALL: Oglethorpe Point Elementary School  
18 on St. Simons Island is proud to take part in conserving  
19 our environment. The campus at Oglethorpe Point boasts a  
20 wonderful natural habitat for student exploration, as well  
21 as several outdoor classrooms. Students and staff work  
22 together to encourage conservation through the school's  
23 recycling program. And they obviously do a good job at  
24 performance, as well.

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1 Hey, kids, out of the corner of my eye I think I  
2 saw Admiral Lautenbacher and Director Hall bust move.  
3 Thank you very much.  
4 I'm going to start off today by just giving you a  
5 very brief preview of the agenda and the process that we  
6 are going to follow. I'm going to make some quick  
7 introductions. We will have some opening comments and very  
8 brief presentations by people here on the stage, and a few  
9 others who have joined us; and we will move right into the  
10 reason that we are gathered here today, which is to listen,  
11 to listen to what you have to say about cooperative  
12 conservation.  
13 The process we are going to follow here is pretty  
14 simple. It's designed to hear from as many people as  
15 possible, although we have a relatively small crowd  
16 compared to what we have had in some of the meetings. So  
17 we won't be in a big rush to get through. We want to make  
18 sure that everyone is adequately heard and has an  
19 opportunity to address these gentlemen and the cooperative  
20 conservative community at large.  
21 As you came in this afternoon you should have  
22 received a card that has a number on it. And what we will  
23 do is use that card, the order of those numbers, to go  
24 through to make comments.

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1 When we get to the public comment session I will  
2 call you in ordered number, ask you to come to the  
3 microphone, which will be positioned up here in the aisle.  
4 I will ask you to give us your name, spell it, especially  
5 if it is an unusual pronunciation, tell us where you are  
6 from and the organization that you are with, if you are  
7 representing one.  
8 Our Court Reporter, Steve Walker, will be  
9 recording all of the comments that are made here today, and  
10 those will be included in a report that goes to the White  
11 House and to the conservation community.  
12 If you don't feel comfortable speaking today or  
13 if you have additional information you would like to  
14 provide in addition to the time period that we allot for  
15 you, there are other opportunities to submit through the  
16 web site, through fax or e-mail, and those contact methods  
17 are listed on the card. Keep in mind that all methods of  
18 input are weighted equally.  
19 My responsibility as Moderator is twofold. First  
20 is to keep everything moving along. So I apologize in  
21 advance if I have to cut you off. We do have a certain  
22 amount of time for each speaker. And second is to keep us

23 all on topic and keep things civil. So we are asking you  
24 to limit your comments to the topics that are on the card,  
25 cooperative conservation. And I reserve the right to cut  
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1 you off if comments go too long or if any comments become  
2 abusive, but I don't expect anything of that nature.  
3 Given the format of these events, we are not able  
4 to answer questions from the stage and get into a  
5 discussion here. This is primarily a listening session.  
6 So we won't be able to answer questions from the stage.  
7 However, these gentlemen will probably be around after the  
8 meeting for some time, and there are some other folks with  
9 their own agencies that are here, as well.  
10 Let me make a few quick introductions of folks  
11 that have joined us in the audience today. First of all, I

12 would like to ask, if you would, just stand up as I read  
13 your name. Ed Martin.

14 MR. MARTIN: Right here.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Ed is with the U.S.

16 Geological Survey. He is the Georgia District Chief.

17 Martin Davenport. Martin is here? No? Okay.

18 Sam Hamilton. Okay. Mr. Hamilton is Regional  
19 Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

20 Noreen Walsh. Noreen is in the back there,  
21 Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services for the  
22 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

23 David Bryant. Mr. Bryant is Deputy Director of  
24 the Georgia Sea Grant Program.

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1 Stephen Adams. Okay. Right down front here.

2 Coastal Region Supervisor of Law Enforcement for Georgia  
3 Department of Natural Resources.

4 Brad Winn. Right next to him. Coastal Program  
5 Non-Game and Wildlife Manager for Georgia DNR.

6 Brad Gane. Okay. Brad is Assistant Director of  
7 Coastal Resources Division for Georgia DNR.

8 Patty McIntosh and Judy Wright, okay, are with  
9 the Gray's Reef Sanctuary Advisory Council.

10 And Susan Shipman. Susan is Director of the  
11 Coastal Resources Division of Georgia Department of Natural  
12 Resources.

13 And Michelle Bart. Is Michelle here? Okay.  
14 Michelle, I believe, will be coming in later. She is the  
15 Regional Director representing Florida Senator Bill  
16 Nelson's Office.

17 Okay. Let me now move to introduce Mr. Dale  
18 Hall.

19 MR. HALL: Well, good afternoon, and thank you  
20 for coming today. You know, maybe I was getting a little  
21 too much in the rap, but as I was listening to those kids  
22 it really is a reminder for all of us that we are here  
23 because we care about natural resources and about  
24 conservation, but we also care about them and the future  
25 generations.

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1           One of the things that comes to my mind when I  
2 think about the children is that 70 percent of all fish and  
3 wildlife habitat in the United States is in private hands.  
4 And if we are going to really leave a legacy, then we  
5 really need to be thinking about how do we get at that 70  
6 percent to go along with the 30 percent that are in public  
7 holdings.

8           These sessions were set up as a follow-up to the  
9 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation that was  
10 held last year in St. Louis. And the questions on the back  
11 of those cards were really sort of the summary of the  
12 things that came out of that conference that are pretty  
13 important. So we are trying to follow-up and get more  
14 localized input on how we can work better with you.

15           There are lots of things going on by a lot of  
16 good people. We're not always talking to each other the  
17 way we should and coordinating and getting the most results  
18 for the actions that are taking place. And I think we need  
19 to be trying to figure out how to do that.

20           And then sometimes there are things that are  
21 disincentives for people who don't want to be involved with  
22 the federal government and working toward cooperative  
23 conservation. We want to know what those are and how we  
24 can work with you or any suggestions that you have on how  
25 we could remedy those. Are there things that we could do

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1 that would be more inviting for you to work with us? The  
2 future generations that we are responsible for looking out  
3 for deserve nothing less than that, and I think all of us  
4 care enough that we can make that happen.

5           Like I said, there's a lot of good people trying  
6 to do a lot of good things. And today Conrad and I are  
7 here to listen and we really do want to hear from a local  
8 level how things can work better. The Department of the  
9 Interior, for an example, actually owns and manages one  
10 out of every five acres in the United States. We work with  
11 561 Native American tribes. A third of the energy in the  
12 United States is produced off of Department of the Interior  
13 lands. There are a lot of things that are held in trust  
14 for you by us in Interior, and we really would like to know  
15 are there ways we can work better with you to make sure  
16 that all the different interests that are out there are  
17 looked at and taken care of.

18           So we really appreciate you coming this  
19 afternoon. I look forward -- and I know Conrad will be  
20 saying the same thing, that we look forward to hearing what  
21 you have to say because, frankly, the time of combatting  
22 over what the solution is has to be put behind us. There  
23 can no longer be this attitude of a winner and a loser.  
24 There is no conflict, in my mind, between good economic  
25 development and good environmental development. We need to

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1 sit down at the table and figure out how we can make them  
2 both happen because they are not mutually exclusive, and I  
3 think that that's why we are here and that's what we are  
4 about. So thank you all very much for coming this  
5 afternoon. We really do appreciate it.

6 ADMIRAL LAUTENBACHER: Thank you very much, Dale.  
7 I have to echo what Dale has said, and I hope I'm not going  
8 to repeat it, but I am a strong believer in everything he  
9 has just said.

10 With that, first of all, I want to thank the  
11 community and all of the good folks that have allowed this  
12 event to happen here in such a beautiful place in our  
13 country. As you heard, I am a retired Vice-Admiral from  
14 the United States Navy. So I am familiar with some of the  
15 Navy installations that are close by here, and I now have  
16 had and for the last five years have had the opportunity to  
17 be involved with the NOAA facilities and activities that  
18 occur in this part from Northern Florida up through Georgia  
19 and into South Carolina.

20 And it is a beautiful day out there, and I think  
21 we are all interested in ensuring that every day will be a  
22 beautiful day, that we are going to preserve our resources  
23 and sustain them in a way that our children and  
24 grandchildren will be proud of what we have done in terms

0010 of stewardship. And that starts with these kinds of ideas,  
1 the cooperative conservation idea, where we work together.

2 I think neither Dale nor I believe you can  
3 control very much from Washington. You know, the days that  
4 we are from Washington and we're here to help doesn't go a  
5 long way. In fact, it's the people who live in the area  
6 that make the difference.

7 And so we are here to listen to what people are  
8 saying, what people are doing, what people want, how can  
9 the federal government be a partner. Partnership is a big  
10 part of NOAA's programs. We obviously in neither of our  
11 agencies have the amount of money that allows us to do  
12 everything in the world that is needed for our environment  
13 and for our resource management, but we do it by  
14 partnership and there are a lot of partners in the audience  
15 today and I thank you.

16 I'll just mention our Gray's Reef Sanctuary.  
17 That's a partnership. We appreciate the work that goes on  
18 with the State and with the help we get from Advisory  
19 Council members who give up their time to bring public  
20 involvement into management of those resources.

21 We have the Sapelo Island National Estuary  
22 Research Reserve, which is an important way to preserve  
23 unique ecosystems in our coastal areas and learn from  
24 what's there to help us plan and ensure that the rest of

0011 the coastline will be preserved in a way that we can be  
1 proud of.

2 And we have Georgia Sea Grant here today. Sea  
3 Grant is another one of our programs that works at bringing  
4 knowledge -- developing knowledge and bringing it down to  
5 every citizen and every organization in our industries that  
6 live and work along the coast.

7 So we are here to listen today. I'm sorry we  
8 don't have time for dialogues. I would love to have a  
9 dialogue, but we want to make sure that everyone has a  
10 chance to be heard. These ideas will go back. It's not  
11

12 just the two agencies you're talking to; you're talking to  
13 the federal interagency group. We are representatives of  
14 all the agencies that can help with cooperative  
15 conservation and can help citizens around the country  
16 provide the kind of environment for the future that they  
17 will be proud of.

18 So, with that, let me thank you again for coming  
19 and I look forward to hearing from you and taking your ideas  
20 back for us to work on. Thank you.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, gentlemen.

22 At the invitation of Director Hall and Admiral  
23 Lautenbacher, we would like to start off with a few folks  
24 who are going to talk a little bit about cooperative

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1 conservation in the area. Brian Thompson is the Mayor of  
2 Brunswick.

3 If you would, come forward to the microphone  
4 right here.

5 MAYOR THOMPSON: Thank you all very much. It was  
6 very nice meeting you all a little earlier today. We  
7 greatly appreciate you being here and it's great to see  
8 many friends and folks, some of whom I haven't seen for a  
9 while, today. We are very pleased you all are here. We  
10 are very pleased that this is taking place here in our  
11 community, particularly at this time.

12 As you know, as you probably are aware, our area  
13 here, Glynn County, McIntosh County, and along the coast,  
14 is really one of the last areas along the East Coast that  
15 is beginning to feel the impacts of growth and development.  
16 And we are trying to do everything we can possibly do to  
17 make sure that we achieve a balance with this growth that  
18 is coming here and that protecting and preserving our  
19 environmental assets are right at the top of that.

20 I am very pleased, along with several other  
21 people here today, to serve on a committee that the  
22 Governor has put together several months ago, the Coastal  
23 Conservation Master Plan Committee. And we are working  
24 diligently regularly over the next year or so to actually

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1 put together a master plan for balanced growth here on the  
2 coast for all counties that actually touch the water.

3 What you are doing here today, soliciting  
4 comments, and much more knowledgeable and in-depth comments  
5 than I would be able to provide, is really invaluable. So  
6 much of how we all relate to each other and how we get  
7 things done here is on a personalized basis.

8 We can really, I think, move things along,  
9 whether it's with the environmental or whether it's in the  
10 business community or the governmental community, by our  
11 associations, relationships, and friendships. If I were to  
12 relay anything to you all in terms of being able to more  
13 cooperatively and effectively work together, more contact,  
14 more presence, more one-on-ones, more dialogue with folks  
15 is so important.

16 And I hope I'm not speaking for myself. I can  
17 make decisions quicker if I know I'm comfortable and I'm  
18 comfortable with the people I'm dealing with and if I know

19 of them. And I think that's important, and I think that's  
20 going to benefit all of us if these relationships that have  
21 been established here and that will continue to be  
22 strengthened will continue to grow and develop.

23 I think we can do an awful lot together, and  
24 that's what it's all about is all of us working together on  
25 this. Thank you.

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1 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

2 Now I would like to introduce Christi Lambert.

3 She is with the Nature Conservancy of Southeast Georgia.

4 MS. LAMBERT: Good afternoon. I live in McIntosh  
5 County and I am based out of our Southeast Georgia  
6 Conservation Office in Darien, and I'd like to welcome you  
7 to Coastal Georgia and to thank you for visiting and, also,  
8 for conducting your Listening Session here, right here in  
9 the heart of such an important land and waterscape, a place  
10 where politically important rivers, the Altamaha and the  
11 Satilla, flow and they empty into the Atlantic and form two  
12 of the most diverse and high-quality inductive estuarine  
13 systems in the world. This is one of the reasons the  
14 Nature Conservancy has located our office here, so that we  
15 can work in collaboration with partners in these priority  
16 conservation areas throughout Georgia.

17 For more than 50 years the Nature Conservancy has  
18 worked to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities  
19 that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting  
20 the lands and the waters that they need to survive.  
21 Cooperative partnerships are a cornerstone of the Nature  
22 Conservancy's work around the world.

23 Successful partnerships include multiple  
24 stakeholders who work together to achieve common  
25 conservation success at a large landscape scale. Finding

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1 that common ground with landowners, with farmers, with  
2 fishers, government agencies, and corporations is essential  
3 to finding creative and practical solutions that balance,  
4 as mentioned earlier, the human needs with conservation  
5 goals.

6 Well-funded federal acquisition programs are  
7 vitally important tools for federal governments to use to  
8 fully exercise their role in conservation and their role as  
9 a conservation partner. Land acquisition programs, such as  
10 the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy, and  
11 the Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program, have  
12 provided the investments necessary to protect such national  
13 treasures as Moody Forest Natural Area; Clay Hall  
14 (phonetic) and Penholloway Swamps right here in the  
15 Altamaha which I think if you have the opportunity to visit  
16 those; Broxton Rocks and Holly Creek up in Northwest  
17 Georgia in the Conasauga watershed; these are important  
18 examples.

19 And here locally we have a collective right here  
20 with our local communities with Georgia Department of  
21 Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
22 local governments, and also private landowners, and we work  
23 collaboratively, with your support, to bring together more

24 than 9000 acres that have either been purchased, placed  
25 under conservation easement or conservation management in  
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1 the Altamaha River corridor. These areas provide wildlife  
2 habitat, water quality and quantity protection, fishing,  
3 boating, hiking, and hunting areas.

4 We think those are very effective at using  
5 federally-allocated dollars, taking them and then leverage  
6 the funding to bring in more state, local, and private  
7 dollars, because we strive -- as partners working together,  
8 we can be more effective at striving to have a larger bang  
9 for the dollars that are invested. And we would be remiss  
10 if we didn't take this opportunity to thank you for  
11 supporting these collaborative projects and, also, to let  
12 you know that we really hope that funding for these  
13 critical federal programs will be increased in the future.

14 Collaborative programs, such as the Atlantic  
15 Coast Joint Venture, Partners in Flight, and the  
16 Southeastern Applied Resources Partnership, provide  
17 regional leadership, information, and support for the  
18 implementation of on-the-ground actions which helps us to  
19 operate more effectively and to leverage our support.  
20 Collaborative surveys of rivers, floodplains, and aquatic  
21 species are being conducted, and management for flow  
22 restoration, species abatement, have taken place through  
23 these important partnership programs.

24 We applaud the Administration's cooperative  
25 conservation grant programs that provide agencies the  
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1 opportunities to work in collaboration with private  
2 landowners. We also recognize the importance of providing  
3 them with assistance. An example of these programs include  
4 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered  
5 Species Fund, Landowner Incentive Program, and private  
6 stewardship grants. In Georgia these programs have  
7 provided funding to landowners to support forest and  
8 wildlife management. By increasing their capacity and  
9 providing them with current technologies and methods, the  
10 landowners can then care for and conserve their lands,  
11 which is a common goal that we all share.

12 The Nature Conservancy is extremely gratified to  
13 have a longstanding collaborative relationship with the  
14 Defense Department in the management of its military

15 installation lands. In Georgia we particularly note our  
16 collaboration at Fort Stewart, Fort Benning, and Fort  
17 Gordon, with planning and monitoring work vital to  
18 ecosystem management. And then more recently our work at  
19 Stewart and Benning have expanded to conserve lands and  
20 waters around these installations as compatible-use buffers  
21 that will usually remain privately owned, protected through  
22 conservation easements.

23 Just this week we closed on a large acquisition  
24 containing areas that will help to buffer the Townsend  
25 Bombing Range and Fort Stewart. Through collaborative

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1 conservation these military buffering programs



2 simultaneously protect the military's mission, their forest  
3 management requirements, and the biological diversity that  
4 is found uniquely on these military installations.

5 The Conservancy supports sustained and increased  
6 funding of these important buffer land programs such as  
7 that provided by the Bob Stump National Defense Act of  
8 2003. With continued support for such creative programs,  
9 we can continue to protect our national heritage, our  
10 working forests, and our national security, and military  
11 readiness all at the same time. The Nature Conservancy  
12 appreciates the Army's longstanding and continued  
13 commitment to conservation.

14 Grand Bay/Banks Lake is a voluntary cooperative  
15 council comprised of the Department of Natural Resources,  
16 Moody Air Force Base, The Nature Conservancy, and the Fish  
17 and Wildlife Service. Those councils have been established  
18 to coordinate management of Grand Bay/Banks Lake to protect  
19 the natural environment there and to ensure the long-term  
20 viability within the context of compatible human use.

21 We also would like to bring to your attention the  
22 Farm Bill. The Nature Conservancy, we work with farmers  
23 who utilize the Farm Bill incentives to conserve their  
24 properties. The Administration should continue to expand  
25 the incentives for conservation on private lands. And when

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1 the reauthorization of the Farm Bill occurs in 2007, we  
2 encourage the increase of conservation programs such as WRP  
3 and EQUIP.

4 I wanted to mention, also, an important  
5 partnership in the collaborative role that the Army Corps  
6 of Engineers plays in cooperative conservation. We are  
7 working with the Corps of Engineers on a project on the  
8 Savannah River to seek to reoperate dams for the benefit of  
9 the environment while preserving human uses.

10 And, also, a project that we are working on, the  
11 U.S. Fire Learning Network. This is an outstanding example  
12 of how agencies in collaboration pulling people together to  
13 have an impact on improving the health of the landscape.

14 And these are some of the examples of  
15 collaboration that really illustrate, we think, the power  
16 of partnerships. And by joining forces with partners we  
17 can accomplish far more than we could on our own and work  
18 together to achieve meaningful and longlasting results.

19 The Nature Conservancy would like to thank you  
20 for your support and for your funding of programs that  
21 bring us together and enable us to be good stewards of our  
22 lands and waters, and we urge you to continue to support  
23 these important collaborative programs. Thank you for the  
24 opportunity to provide comments to enhance cooperation and  
25 conservation.

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1 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Ms. Lambert.

2 And I would like to introduce Wesley Langdale.  
3 Mr. Langdale is with Langdale Corporation and also with The  
4 Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners.

5 MR. LANGDALE: Thank you, and it's a pleasure to  
6 be with you today and an honor to testify at this Listening

7 Session. I would like to especially thank Director Dale  
8 Hall, Sam Hamilton from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
9 and NOAA Administrator Lautenbacher.

10 In reviewing the issues that were set for the  
11 agenda today, it is very clear that U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
12 Service is open to receiving commentary on how it can help,  
13 an effort for which the agency should be applauded.

14 In assessing how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
15 Service can help in Georgia, it is of critical importance  
16 that we take into account the dynamics that make up our  
17 state; in particular, the fact that 24 million of Georgia's  
18 37 million acres of land are covered in forest, and that 18  
19 million of those acres are owned by approximately 600,000  
20 landowners who manage working forests.

21 When considering the goals of enhancing wildlife  
22 habitat and species protection, the acres and potential  
23 habitat that private landowners control and manage  
24 represents the single most important opportunity that the  
25 state and the federal government has to achieving their

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1 ecological goals in Georgia. Simply stated, through  
2 collaboration with the landowner community, the potential  
3 to enhance the ecological values of Georgia is tremendous.

4 How can we do this? We are very fortunate that a  
5 lot of work has already been done. Over the past several  
6 years Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Non-Game  
7 Wildlife Resource Division, has been working diligently on  
8 a statewide conservation wildlife action plan. This year  
9 the plan was approved on a federal level.

10 Thus, DNR's Non-Game Division has worked  
11 extremely hard with a group of stakeholders to put this  
12 plan together and deserves accolades for the work that they  
13 have done. Along with countless other plans that the state  
14 of Georgia is working on, ranging on issues from energy to  
15 water to taxes, we are taking a hard look at how we can  
16 make Georgia a better state environmentally.

17 But the analysis of our current status and  
18 options are not enough. We must work towards actions. And  
19 in Georgia the federal government can help devote state and  
20 federal incentive-based programs that help landowners, non-  
21 governmental groups, and state and federal agencies achieve  
22 overarching ecological goals. Simply stated, we can all  
23 work together to put the eco into the economics of owning  
24 and managing forests, wildlife habitat, and land in  
25 Georgia.

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1 We are at a crossroads of a new era of  
2 collaboration between the landowner and the federal  
3 government that parallels important times in our past. In  
4 the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, the role of the government was  
5 paramount in the lives of landowners throughout the  
6 Southeast. The work that federal agencies like the U.S.  
7 Forest Service did to develop naval stores and turpentine  
8 technologies and methods of forest management was the  
9 lifeline that allowed private ownership of forests in  
10 Georgia to flourish.

11 It is interesting to note, however, that the

12 naval stores and the turpentine industry is now extinct.  
13 The point here is that the government played a vital role  
14 at a critical time in the life of Georgia's forests in the  
15 early 1900s and helped launch an industry that has  
16 developed into a mature, highly diversified industry  
17 supporting forests, wildlife habitat, and jobs throughout  
18 the Southern United States.

19 And today there is once again a tremendous  
20 opportunity for the federal government to help a new  
21 generation of landowners embark on a path of new market  
22 development and the establishment of values that our  
23 forests offer societies in Georgia, America, and throughout  
24 the world.

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1 We can review another example of how we can put  
2 the eco into economics by considering what happened around  
3 the Southeast when the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, or the RCW,  
4 was listed as an endangered species. The resulting  
5 perceptions that were created in some communities have  
6 taught us some very important lessons. After the listing,  
7 a combination of rumors and gossip in small-town coffee  
8 shops across the region made people fear finding RCWs on  
9 their land, and not to mention reporting them to the  
10 government.

11 How much better would things have been if,  
12 instead of people fearing finding RCWs on their land, they  
13 would actually want to have RCWs on their land? What we're  
14 talking about is focusing on offering the carrot instead of  
15 the stick, allowing people to do the right things, using  
16 their own resources, to manage and enhance the habitat  
17 species and recognizing that contribution to society  
18 through monetary or other meaningful incentives.

19 The importance of working together is becoming  
20 increasingly critical. Over the past 40 to 50 years our  
21 nation has focused on developing environmental laws, rules,  
22 and enforcement, and it is safe to assume that our nation  
23 will continue to focus on enforcement and rule-making into  
24 the future. But there are also many ways that we can  
25 succeed in the realm of environmental protection and

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1 enhancement that does not have anything to do with  
2 enforcement. And I am referring to the encouragement of  
3 private-sector environmental stewardship tailored to  
4 achieve public-sector goals. In other words, encouraging  
5 good behavior.

6 How can we generate ground-level action by people  
7 managing our natural resources that matches the sound  
8 science policies that are set in what seems like a million  
9 miles away in Washington, D.C.? In considering this I am  
10 reminded of the motto of the Georgia Forestry Commission  
11 which is as follows: Get the right people with the right  
12 behavior doing the right things, and the right things will  
13 happen. It's all about people, right people, right  
14 behavior, right things happening.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Langdale?

16 MR. LANGDALE: Yes?

17 MR. MARSHALL: Can I get you to wrap up fairly

18 quickly?

19 MR. LANGDALE: Okay. I'll skip on down.

20 At the end of the day the threats to nature are  
21 not coming from one group or community; it is all part of  
22 the human impact upon the earth. And in Georgia it can be  
23 summed up in one word, urbanization. The simple fact, that  
24 urbanization poses the largest and most comprehensive  
25 challenges to the future of the state's natural resources

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1 and natural-resource-based economies. Remember that there  
2 are 9 million people here today; we are projected to add  
3 another 8 million in the next 15 years.

4 Ultimately, as Americans and Georgians, we should  
5 be asking ourselves how can we have a green state, provide  
6 jobs for our children, a healthy tax base, and leave our  
7 natural and managed ecosystems in better shape than they  
8 are today.

9 And, in closing, I would just like to leave with  
10 some words from a good friend, Rex Bonner with the  
11 Conservation Fund. He told me one time -- he said despite  
12 people's differences, backgrounds, beliefs, and points of  
13 view, we should all remember one important thing, quote,  
14 "when the last crop is asphalt, we all lose," end of quote.  
15 Thank you very much or your time.

16 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Langdale.

17 All right. Let's go ahead and begin the informal  
18 part of the Listening Session here. Let me briefly explain  
19 to you the process again. I'm going to call in order of  
20 number for the cards that you received when you came in.  
21 I'm going to ask you to come forward to the microphone  
22 here. If you could, queue up. If you're no. 3 and no. 1  
23 has come forward, please queue up just down the aisle here  
24 so that we can move folks forward fairly quickly.

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1 Again, come to the microphone; if you would, tell  
2 us your name, spell it, and let us know where you are from  
3 and what organization you represent, if you are  
4 representing an organization. Our Court Reporter, Steve  
5 Walker, will be collecting all of the comments here and  
6 capturing those into a report. If you are not comfortable  
7 speaking today or if you want to make comments  
8 additionally, or if you have written comments, written  
9 comments can be placed in the box in the back, and then you  
10 can also submit comments through the contact information on  
11 the card that you were provided.

12 How many folks are intending on making comments  
13 today?

14 (Show of hands)

15 Okay. Good, good. Given that we have a  
16 relatively small group of people here, would it be okay if  
17 we started out by allowing folks 2 minutes, 30 seconds?  
18 And what I will do is I will provide a warning at 2  
19 minutes, 30 seconds. I will just hold this up so that you  
20 can see it. And if you would wrap up then within the next  
21 30 seconds and we will get the next person up. So, again,  
22 as Moderator my responsibility is to keep things moving  
23 along, keep us all on topic, and make sure that we get out

24 of here by 4:30 or so today. So I don't think that's going  
25 to be a problem.

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1 So, with that, may I have no. 1? And perhaps if  
2 2 through 5 can queue up back in the back of the room  
3 there.

4 MR. DARRACQ: My name is Eric Darracq. I work  
5 with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife  
6 Resources Division. I work out of Social Circle in the  
7 Private Land Program statewide.

8 Through partnership efforts in Georgia and  
9 several other states, we would like to present eight  
10 recommendations that we believe would greatly improve  
11 conservation from our mountains to our oceans.

12 First, fish and wildlife should be coequal  
13 priority with soil and water in authorization and  
14 implementation of all conservation programs of the Farm  
15 Bill.

16 Second, all Farm Bill titles should work  
17 together, not at cross-purposes, to maintain and promote  
18 conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, soil and water,  
19 and not inadvertently promote conversion or loss of  
20 habitats. The National Fish Habitat action plans, states'  
21 wildlife action plans, North American Waterfowl Management  
22 Plan, Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, and  
23 others, can help accomplish this.

24 Third, technical assistance funding must be  
25 increased to help implement all conservation programs to

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1 accomplish required and voluntary habitat management and  
2 implement financial assistance benefiting landowners and  
3 conservation.

4 Fourth, establish a habitat technical team of  
5 expert natural resource professionals in each state that  
6 will provide technical guidance to USDA agencies, state-  
7 level decision-making authorities on conservation programs  
8 regarding fish and wildlife habitat.

9 Five, state enactment of the 2002 Farm Bill.  
10 Demand for conservation programs and their environmental  
11 benefits continue to increase. So rather than reducing  
12 appropriations, as has occurred in past years for these  
13 programs, support, maintain, or increase the authorized  
14 funding for all conservation programs.

15 Six, support only those energy initiatives that  
16 carefully promote ecologically healthy fish and wildlife  
17 populations' habitats and ecosystems and the natural  
18 resources that we use with them.

19 Seven, to more effectively address environmental  
20 problems and demonstrate societal and conservation benefits  
21 derived from Farm Bill programs, funds must be made  
22 available for the implementation of standard monitoring  
23 procedures to ensure that fish and wildlife, soil and water  
24 goals are met on all involved acres.

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1 And the last recommendation that we have or  
2 today, a forestry title is needed in the 2007 Farm Bill  
3 that carefully encourages large-scale ecosystem restoration

4 that includes recognition of ecoregions and that focus on  
5 improving management of forest ecosystems and identifies  
6 critical forest resource areas using a comprehensive region  
7 and safe-forest resource assessment.

8 The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division  
9 sincerely appreciates this opportunity to provide  
10 suggestions.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

12 No. 2?

13 MR. KONTER: Good afternoon. My name is Jerry  
14 Konter, and I am a homebuilder from Savannah, Georgia. I  
15 appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to you  
16 today. Good environmental laws that provide opportunities  
17 for market-based solutions are an important starting point  
18 for cooperative conservation. Unfortunately, today's laws  
19 are outdated and do not protect the environment in the most  
20 efficient and effective way, thus, are rarely amenable to  
21 collaborative solutions.

22 There are three programs that can deliver  
23 positive results through improved cooperation and a look  
24 towards the market; the Endangered Species Act, the Federal  
25 Stormwater Program, and the Federal Weapons Program.

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1 The Endangered Species Act is over 30 years old  
2 and is not working. Despite its dismal track record, the  
3 ESA continues to dictate how private property may be used.  
4 Improvements to the act are long past due. Because 90  
5 percent of all listed species are located on private lands,  
6 there must be a renewed effort to find cooperative  
7 incentive-based solutions if real progress is to be made.

8 First, the implementation of Section 7  
9 consultation requirements must be streamlined. Second,  
10 critical habitat guidance must be developed to ensure that  
11 an open and consistent destination process is followed.  
12 And, third, opportunities for voluntary conservation  
13 efforts must be increased.

14 The second program I would like to highlight is  
15 the MGS Stormwater Program. The current stormwater  
16 regulations are complex, confusing, costly, and oftentimes  
17 duplicative in efforts of state and local governments.  
18 Furthermore, the lack of compliance assistance and the  
19 agency's overbearing focus on punitive enforcement reduces  
20 the program's legitimacy and, thereby, its effectiveness.

21 The following suggestions could improve water  
22 quality while facilitating compliance. First, the  
23 permitting process must be streamlined and simplified by  
24 eliminating duplicative permit requirements. Second, EPA  
25 and the state should collaborate to develop consistent

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1 enforcement policies that focus on environmental  
2 protection. And, third, watershed partnership programs  
3 should be developed to facilitate innovative and improved  
4 long-term compliance. Clearly, stormwater regulations that  
5 are well-coordinated, simple, and fair will encourage  
6 compliance and, in the end, do more to protect rivers and  
7 streams than the current system.

8 Finally, I would like to touch on the opportunity

9 presented by the Clean Water Act, Section 404 Wetlands  
10 Program. The wetlands permitting process is lengthy,  
11 difficult, and continues to be filled with confusion and  
12 uncertainty. At a minimum, administrative guidance must be  
13 issued to clarify which waters and wetlands are subject to  
14 federal jurisdiction. The program must also be reformed to  
15 streamline the permitting process and provide incentives  
16 for protecting wetlands.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I  
18 am hopeful that the Administration can move quickly to  
19 solve these ongoing challenges.

20 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

21 No. 3?

22 MR. LOPEZ: My name is Hector Lopez. I am  
23 currently the president of the Homebuilders Association of  
24 Georgia and I am also a builder from Savannah, Georgia.  
25 Thank you for coming to the coast.

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1 Good environmental laws that provide  
2 opportunities for market-based solutions are an important  
3 starting point to any cooperative conservation.  
4 Unfortunately, today's laws are outdated and do not protect  
5 the environment in the most efficient and effective way,  
6 thus, are rarely amenable for collaborative solutions.

7 To facilitate collaborative solutions it is  
8 imperative that the affected parties participate and have  
9 buy-in before proposed rules and regulations are brought to  
10 the public hearing. There are many benefits that can be  
11 utilized by the practical experience of the builder-and-  
12 developer community. Once the rules and regulations are  
13 out for public hearing, there is a perception that it's a  
14 done deal, especially with the Army Corps of Engineers.

15 The need for checks and balances within the  
16 Corps, for example, the release of 22 billion gallons of  
17 water into the Chattahoochee River this spring because of a  
18 miscalculated gauge. Also, the necessity for addressing  
19 the definition of navigable waters and the impact that it  
20 has on private landowners.

21 There is always a need to minimize paperwork,  
22 especially from the standpoint of stormwater. Water  
23 availability is a growing concern here in Georgia and, I'm  
24 sure nationally. And it's not about the difference between

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1 humans and sturgeons or humans and dollars; it's just  
2 ensuring that we have water for everyone.

3 Thank you for your time.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

5 No. 4?

6 MR. NEWMAN: I'm Tyler Newman. I'm with the  
7 Homebuilders Association of Georgia. Because many of  
8 today's laws are outdated and do not protect the  
9 environment in the most efficient or effective way, I am  
10 hopeful that this push for cooperative conservation will  
11 encourage collaborative solutions, facilitate compliance,  
12 and protect property rights while improving the  
13 environmental results that everyone wants to enjoy.

14 I would like to touch on the collaborative

15 opportunities presented by the Clean Water Act, Section 404  
16 Wetlands Program. The wetlands permitting process is  
17 lengthy and difficult and continues to be filled with  
18 confusion and uncertainty. First, to elicit better  
19 cooperation, administrative guidance must be issued to  
20 clarify which waters and wetlands are subject to federal  
21 jurisdiction. The determination of which waters are  
22 subject to federal authority currently depends on where in  
23 the country the property lies. That makes little sense,  
24 considering this is a national program.

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1 But for the nation's landowners, the regulators  
2 themselves need clear direction as to which waters and  
3 wetlands are in and which are out. Administrative guidance  
4 developed jointly with stakeholders will reduce the  
5 inconsistency and confusion currently experienced and help  
6 to foster collaborative efforts where private landowners  
7 and agencies can work together for wetlands protection.

8 Second, the wetlands permitting process must be  
9 streamlined and incentives provided for those who take  
10 steps to protect wetlands. The current regulatory program  
11 is cumbersome and lengthy, even for projects that have  
12 minimal impacts on the environment. By refocusing efforts  
13 on projects that are likely to have the greatest impacts,  
14 the agencies can free up time to develop incentives or  
15 other mechanisms to improve wetlands protection.

16 Finally, the various levels of government must  
17 work in concert with private landowners to create, enhance,  
18 and protect wetlands where appropriate. In Ohio  
19 homebuilders have been working with the state for over 10  
20 years to create and improve wetlands for the enjoyment at  
21 all. Similar programs could be established across the  
22 nation to help restore and protect these valuable  
23 resources.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to comment. By  
25 incorporating these suggestions into your final actions, I

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1 am certain that the Administration will improve stewardship  
2 and enhance wetland protection across the nation.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

4 Okay. No. 5?

5 MS. THOMPSON: Good afternoon. My name is Lydia  
6 Thompson. I am from St. Simons Island, Georgia, but I also  
7 consider Jekyll my backyard. I am with Coastal Georgia  
8 Audubon. I would like to first say what a great job our  
9 hardworking staffs of the Ecological Services Office here  
10 in Brunswick and Savannah National Wildlife Refuge are  
11 doing. And I see Okefenokee here, too. We have an  
12 impressive group of people working very hard.

13 I would like to say that the Endangered Species  
14 Act is working. It is a balancer between the sensitive  
15 resources and our developing coast. It helps to keep what  
16 we love here. Please leave it alone, and especially  
17 Section 7. The Ecological Services Office needs to stay on  
18 the coast and be staffed. There is a tremendous explosion  
19 of development on the coast. Our sensitive resources, the  
20 wetlands, endangered species, are protected under good



21 laws, and we need high-quality workers of the Ecological  
22 Services to help.

23 Thank you so very much for coming.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

25 No. 6? Okay. No. 6? No. 7? No. 8?

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1 What number did you have, ma'am?

2 MS. BAMBACH: Eight, sir.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Eight. Thank you.

4 MS. BAMBACH: Six is my husband and he's not  
5 speaking.

6 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

7 MS. BAMBACH: Good afternoon. My name is Dorothy  
8 Bambach. I am president of Ogeechee Audubon Society in  
9 Savannah, Georgia. I thought it was time for a little  
10 change of pace. Our 700 members have for many years now  
11 been engaged in activities that you would term cooperative  
12 education, cleaning up our waterways and beaches, assisting  
13 scientists with research projects, conducting educational  
14 programs for the public, and promoting nature-based tourism  
15 to provide local communities with an economic incentive to  
16 protect sensitive areas and species.

17 We have had consistent support in these efforts  
18 from a handful of businesses and private landowners, but  
19 our projects would benefit from much wider participation  
20 from the private and the public sectors. Our activities  
21 are very well-publicized. We exclude no one from them.  
22 And I would invite all of the members of the Homebuilders  
23 Association to please come to one of our meetings. They  
24 are held monthly in Savannah. They are in the paper. We  
25 would love to see you there. And that's the best way to

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1 get a dialogue going. And I would be happy to come to your  
2 meetings if I were to receive an invitation.

3 But you have asked what the federal government  
4 can do to promote desirable conservation outcomes. In our  
5 opinion, there are four most critical things. First, keep  
6 and strengthen the Endangered Species Act; do not dilute  
7 it. Provide strong and consistent enforcement of this law.  
8 Be willing to put your jobs on the line to secure adequate  
9 funding for our national wildlife refuge system. And  
10 reduce our dependence on all oil, not just foreign oil, so  
11 that we can keep drilling out of the Arctic Refuge and  
12 Teshekpuk Lake.

13 Look, let's not kid ourselves. Cooperative  
14 conservation is no substitute for a strong Endangered  
15 Species Act any more than cooperative driving could replace  
16 our current system of traffic laws. Please don't sell us  
17 short. We have made great strides here right in Georgia  
18 with Red-cockaded Woodpecker, wood stork, loggerhead sea  
19 turtles, but there are many other species of concern that  
20 still face extinction and extinction from a non-natural  
21 cause. The ESA is their safety net and there is much work

22 to do.

23 Thank you for your attention and for visiting  
24 Coastal Georgia. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

25 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

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1 No. 9? No. 10? If I could get through 15 to  
2 queue up along the aisle back here, I'd appreciate it.

3 MR. HATTEN: My name is Rick Hatten. I'm Chief  
4 of Forest Management of Georgia Forestry Commission, our  
5 state forestry agency. As earlier was mentioned, we have  
6 an awful lot of forest land in the state, 24 million acres.  
7 Most of it is in private hands, and our job is to help  
8 those people to manage their lands to the best advantage  
9 and benefit to the resource.

10 Most of the tools we use come through federal  
11 programs. Most of them are through the Department of  
12 Agriculture and Forest Service, but one specific program we  
13 deal with is the Partners For Fish and Wildlife under the  
14 Department of the Interior. It's a great program. We  
15 don't believe that it's funded high enough. We are making  
16 some accomplishments across the state on some private lands  
17 in regards of the longleaf and wiregrass restoration, and  
18 we believe we can accomplish even more with better funding  
19 to that program.

20 Annually I work with over 46 different agencies,  
21 conservation organizations, and landowner groups. We all  
22 have to work together to be able to deliver a good-quality

23 forestry program to the state, and we appreciate the  
24 programs that you use because many of those partners are  
25 more involved in the Department of Interior programs than

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1 the Forestry Commission is directly. We appreciate any  
2 increases you can make in those programs for their benefits  
3 and be glad to answer any questions you may have. Thank  
4 you.

5 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

6 Okay. No. 11? 12? No. 13? 14?

7 MR. PHILLIPS: My name is Bill Phillips. I am  
8 the Unitarian Universalist minister here in Coastal  
9 Georgia, and I am a stakeholder. I breathe this air. I  
10 drink the water here. I walk on the wonderful beaches, and  
11 I walk on the land of this whole county.

12 I would like to simply remind you all that a lot  
13 of stakeholders who breathe the air, drink the water, and  
14 walk on this land are not represented here today. If you  
15 look around, we are a completely 99 percent white group of  
16 people. We have little Hispanic representation, while we  
17 have thousands of Hispanics who live in this county. We  
18 have no African-American representation.

19 I promised myself I wasn't going to speak at this  
20 meeting. I came to listen and learn. All I really want to  
21 say is I would like to remind you all that you represent  
22 the people who are not here. You must protect our air, our  
23 water, or it will not happen. You must protect our  
24 wetlands and our habitat, or it will not happen. Please  
25 take responsibility and do your job to protect all the

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1 people so that we have cleaner air, cleaner water, and  
2 ground that is not contaminated. Thank you very much for

3 coming.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

5 No. 15?

6 MR. WINN: Director Hall, Admiral Lautenbacher,  
7 thank you very much for coming to Georgia. We are humbled  
8 to have you in this town. My name is Brad Winn. I am the  
9 lead for the Non-Game Wildlife Program on the coast. And  
10 we are on a daily basis working with both Fish and Wildlife  
11 Service staffs, both locally, regionally, and nationally;  
12 and, also, with NOAA Fisheries on issues of conservation on  
13 our coast. I hope both of you can spend a little bit of  
14 time here and look at what we have. It's really an  
15 extraordinary part of the Atlantic Coast and we are quite  
16 delighted, our staffs are delighted to be working here.

17 If wanted to say that we do not have any state-  
18 appropriated funding for our program. We depend on a  
19 license plate. We have two license plates out right now.  
20 And we depend on fundraising and depend on very minor  
21 checkoff on our tax forms, as well, and donations to our  
22 program. Our ability to fulfill our goals and our mandated  
23 estate is dependent on our interaction both as partners  
24 with the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries, but

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1 also with funding particularly to Section 6 of the  
2 Endangered Species Act.

3 We are working very hard to maintain populations  
4 of right whales on our coast, -- we have the only known  
5 calving grounds for right whales here -- to maintain our  
6 manatee populations. We have a very extensive program to  
7 maintain and restore nesting sea turtles on this coast.  
8 And all of those, plus more with wood storks and all the  
9 other endangered species, and with a new listing of red  
10 knots, provide us with not only staff time but ability on-  
11 the-ground to literally protect the nests of these turtles,  
12 on-the-ground research work with right whales and other  
13 species.

14 So if you have the capabilities to maintain and  
15 strengthen the Section 6 funding for states, we really do  
16 depend on it. And I want to thank both of you very much  
17 for the efforts and really to be able to work with both  
18 staffs of NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Service has  
19 been a real pleasure. Thank you.

20 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

21 Okay. No. 16? No. 17?

22 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: I'll send in written  
23 comments.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Thank you.

25 No. 18?

0042

1 MR. ADAMS: Good afternoon, Director Hall,  
2 Admiral Lautenbacher. My name is Stephen Adams. I am the  
3 Regional Supervisor for the Law Enforcement Section of the  
4 Wildlife Resources Division. I am currently here on the  
5 coast. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and  
6 the audience on the conservation cooperation between the  
7 Georgia Department of Natural Resources, NOAA, and the U.S.  
8 Fish and Wildlife Service. And what I would like to do is

9 just take a minute of your time and outline what I feel  
10 like is a success story with cooperative conservation.

11 As both of you may know, the state of Georgia has  
12 a hundred miles of shoreline to the Atlantic Ocean which is  
13 contiguous to the exclusive economic zone in federal  
14 waters. Many species of marine life are found both in  
15 state and federal waters.

16 In 1992 the State of Georgia entered into a  
17 cooperative enforcement agreement with the National Marine  
18 Fisheries Service at NOAA. This agreement allowed state  
19 officers to enforce federal fisheries regulations relative  
20 to the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation Management  
21 Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species  
22 Act, and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. That  
23 agreement was updated and amended in 1996 and again in  
24 1998.

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1 Currently Georgia provides law-enforcement  
2 support for the following fishery management plans: red  
3 drum, sea trout, wheat fish, croker, spot, dolphin, wahoo,  
4 horseshoe crabs, and as well as other fish. Georgia also  
5 provides law-enforcement support for gear compliance  
6 checks, inspections for the turtle excluder devices, and  
7 for bi-catch reduction devices in the trawler fleet that  
8 operates in both state and federal waters.

9 One of the main success stories in a 1999 Georgia  
10 entered into a joint enforcement agreement. We are  
11 currently working under JEA 5 and just completed JEA 4 at  
12 the end of 2006. It's a mutually beneficial partnership  
13 that allows the State of Georgia to purchase, maintain, and  
14 operate a fleet of vessels and to maintain these for  
15 enforcement work that would not be possible with State  
16 funding alone.

17 Georgia conservation rangers have participated in  
18 enforcement of recreational fishing limits, commercial  
19 fishing limits, gear and location restrictions in the  
20 commercial and the recreational fleet.

21 Commercial fishery enforcement is also a priority  
22 to JEA, and officers have made significant cases as a  
23 result of this joint enforcement agreement. In JEA 4  
24 Georgia was asked by the NOAA Office of Protected Species  
25 to provide directed patrols for the protection of the

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1 northern right whale. In JEA 4 officers with the Georgia  
2 Department of Natural Resources logged over 70 vessel hours  
3 dedicated to the conservation and protection of the right  
4 whale.

5 This level of enforcement would not be possible  
6 without the joint enforcement agreement and assistance from  
7 NOAA. Because of this agreement and the cooperation  
8 between the state and federal partners, the right whale  
9 will continue to have protection through JEA 5 and beyond.

10 And I would just like to take this opportunity to  
11 say thanks from the law-enforcement section to both of your  
12 agencies for your support.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

14 No. 19? 20? 21?

15 MR. MARANE: My name is Russ Marane. I am with  
16 The Trust for Public Land and I'm here to speak about the  
17 program that the Trust for Public Land and our conservation  
18 partners, The Nature Conservancy and The Georgia Land  
19 Trust, is undertaking at Fort Stewart. Our mission there  
20 is to create a compatible-use buffer surrounding Fort  
21 Stewart by identifying and target lands with conservation  
22 value for conservation easements in order for Fort Stewart  
23 to be able to maintain its training mission viability.

24 This partnership with Fort Stewart grew out of a  
25 Greenprint plan prepared by The Trust for Public Land and  
0045

1 The Nature Conservancy which identified specific parcels  
2 surrounding the base which had conservation values because  
3 of their characteristics, including sensitive river  
4 corridors, particularly the Canoochee and Ogeechee Rivers,  
5 timber-producing lands, natural forests, lands that had  
6 unique habitat that could support those endangered species  
7 which reside on the base, including the Red-cockaded  
8 Woodpecker; everybody's favorite, the gopher turtle; the  
9 indigo snake, and other species.

10 To date this partnership has protected over 400  
11 acres with conservation easements in two transactions which  
12 closed in late 2005 and just several weeks ago. Four  
13 transactions which will protect 3000 acres with  
14 conservation easements are scheduled to close at the end of  
15 -- by the end of this year.

16 I'm going to speed up here. Funding for this  
17 program so far has exceeded \$6 million through the  
18 Department of Defense funding to the U.S. Army for the ACUP  
19 (phonetic) program at Fort Stewart. And we are grateful  
20 for the Army's longstanding and continued commitment to  
21 proactive conservation, as well as the funding that has  
22 been available for military buffers since passage of the  
23 Bob Stump National Defense Act of 2003. With the  
24 continuing support of these programs, we can continue our

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1 program to preserve land around Fort Stewart through the  
2 ACUP program.

3 Our challenge going forward is to bring the other  
4 federal agencies with similar interests and missions into  
5 this program to ensure the long-term viability of this very  
6 important military installation. The time is now to  
7 protect these lands. With the rapidly growing and  
8 developing coast of Georgia, we don't have much time,  
9 particularly in the eastern portions of this base, and we  
10 need all of the cooperation of the federal and state  
11 agencies that we can get. Thank you.

12 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

13 All right. No. 22?

14 MR. CAMPBELL: My name is Chip Campbell. I'm  
15 with Okefenokee Adventures. My wife and I, we own the  
16 Visitors Services concession contract at the Okefenokee  
17 National Wildlife Refuge and at Banks Lake National  
18 Wildlife Refuge.

19 I have had the opportunity twice to testify  
20 before the House Resources Commission on legislation to

21 bring the Fish and Wildlife Services concession contracting  
22 program in line with that of the National Parks Service,  
23 specifically in regard to what is done with the percentage,  
24 the royalty that we pay in exchange for the privilege of  
25 operating on the national wildlife refuge.

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1 I support the concept of returning those  
2 resources to the facilities where they are generated for  
3 their public-use programs or for whatever other programs  
4 deemed suitable, but especially with the public-use  
5 program. Currently it goes into the general fund and then  
6 to the revenue sharing program. Compared to the amount of  
7 money that's in that program with timber sales and oil and  
8 gas extraction royalties, the amount that goes in from  
9 concession contracts is a very negligible amount of money,  
10 but it sure could be used on site. And so I hope that the  
11 third time will be a charm and we can revisit that in the  
12 future.

13 I want to echo the comments made by several  
14 people here about supporting and fully funding programs for  
15 private landowner incentives. I especially would like to  
16 see the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund fully  
17 funded. My understanding is there is \$900 million a year  
18 taken in on that program which involves surtaxes on  
19 offshore oil and gas leases. But that money doesn't tend  
20 to make it back out again in terms of appropriations, as I  
21 understand it, and I think it would be only appropriate if  
22 that changes.

23 Finally, as to how the federal government can  
24 work with states, perhaps other partners, on science, the  
25 mood now, since obviously the funding is not available even

0048

1 at this time to really do the science at the service level  
2 that it needs to be done, we need to make sure that there  
3 are criteria established for the sharing of data between  
4 these different partners instead of letting differences in  
5 methodology collecting, you know, sample collecting, that  
6 kind of thing, actually stymie the sharing of the data  
7 between agencies.

8 Thanks or the opportunity to speak with y'all.

9 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

10 Okay. No. 23? Are you no. 23, sir? Okay. No.

11 24? No. 25?

12 MR. VARN: My name is Will Varn. I reside on St.  
13 Simons. I'm here representing the Forest Landowners  
14 Association, and I've got five points that I'd like to  
15 touch on on their behalf.

16 Federal death tax. The Administration has  
17 supported the repeal and, more recently, the reform of the  
18 death tax. Forest landowners are thankful for and

19 indebtedness to this Administration for that support. We  
20 respectfully request that the Administration focus on this  
21 modification of existing tax law, actively supporting the  
22 efforts of congressional leadership in reaching the  
23 modification.

24 Endangered Species Act. Again, we commend the

25 Administration as having effectively supported the

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1 necessary changes to the Endangered Species Act and its  
2 regulations that forest landowners seek. Forest landowners  
3 want to recover at-risk species of plants and animals but  
4 are currently stymied by an onerous collection of  
5 regulations that the authors never intended. We ask that  
6 the Administration effectively support the repair of the  
7 ESA so that landowners are given incentives to make their  
8 land available to species recovery so that all landowners  
9 actually want to find endangered and threatened species on  
10 their property, and that landowners are allowed to be the  
11 conservationists, ecologists, and good Americans that we  
12 are by working in a realistic fashion to conserve native  
13 habitat, flora, and fauna.

14 Appropriations. The fiscal year 2006 budget  
15 blueprint proposed by the Administration left little or no  
16 room for improvement over fiscal year 2005 expenditures.  
17 Forest landowners recommend that funding of the McIntire-  
18 Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program and the  
19 Renewable Resources Extension Act retain a hundred percent  
20 formula funding, that each program's funding increase by at  
21 least 10 percent over fiscal year 2006 levels.

22 The Canadian softwood lumber trade dispute.  
23 Forest landowners recommended that fees and duties  
24 accumulated during the recently resolved dispute with the  
25 Canadian government over trade laws be distributed

0050

1 equitably to landowners and others found injured as  
2 determined correct and proper by the Meritorious  
3 Initiatives Board from funds to representative injured  
4 parties.

5 Woody biomass. Forest landowners are, as anyone  
6 would expect, highly interested in the production of  
7 alternative energy feed stocks from trees, and as segments  
8 of the forest products industry infrastructure trends  
9 offshore, new markets can answer the questions raised about  
10 whether forest landowners will sell trees or sell real  
11 estate. So it is highly recommended that "woody biomass"  
12 be defined in statute and in regulation as wood and not  
13 simply wood residues. We would like to see wood as an  
14 equal partner in all cellulosic feed stocks. Thank you.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

16 Okay. No. 26?

17 MR. HARRIS: I'm Jonny Harris. I represent  
18 Georgia cattlemen and farmers. Myself, I own a farm that  
19 goes back to 1860 in my family. We have and want to  
20 encourage you to continue supporting the NRCS, their field  
21 people. We work very closely with them. We have some  
22 projects that have done an excellent job of maintaining the  
23 environment with water usage. We have put up nearly 404  
24 miles of fence in the last two years to keep cattle out of  
25 streams. And this is at a voluntary type thing, but we're

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1 getting help. We urge you to keep that funding going to  
2 help cattlemen, help farmers.

3 Our farm operation includes all aspects of it.

4 We grow crop, cattle, and forage. So we encompass a lot of  
5 these things, and we have a lot of good help from our NRCS.  
6 We just learned yesterday that some of the funding for your  
7 strip-till, unless it's on vegetable growth, is going to be  
8 reduced by \$10 an acre. We would urge you to refocus on  
9 that and maybe re-fund that back to the level it was  
10 because it has done a good job, you know, getting a lot of  
11 strip-till conservation tilling started, but it isn't  
12 complete yet. We have spent a lot of money buying new  
13 equipment so we could do this. But the land is in a lot  
14 better shape than it was in 1860.

15 Erosion. We have put grass waterways and  
16 undisturbed land, put tree buffers around these fields to  
17 stop that growth. As a matter of fact, an NRCS  
18 representative was at my farm yesterday and that's what we  
19 were mapping out some places on some land that we had just  
20 gotten back in from another branch of our family that  
21 brought it back in. And it had gulleys on them. So we are  
22 doing some good work, and you are doing some good work.

23 We just urge you, you know, to keep us there on  
24 that, on some of the dust and, particularly, erosion. I  
25 can't understand -- you know, it's been so dry in our area,

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1 a cricket makes dust when he walks. So how are you going  
2 to stop a cow from making some dust at times? But we do  
3 have places where we wet down cattle pens when we can. We  
4 do those things already. So we are working in that. But,  
5 you know, we try to take care of them. My job is to leave  
6 that land in better shape than I got it.

7 And I thank y'all for listening to me. Take it  
8 to heart and keep it going.

9 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

10 Okay. No. 27?

11 MR. STRICKLAND: Jim Strickland. I represent  
12 Georgia Cattlemen's Organization, about 5000 membership,  
13 family members, cattle producers, their wives and children,  
14 and also associate producers supporting our industry. And  
15 we are representing probably, we hope, one of the best and  
16 tastiest proteins that we provide for people.

17 And, first of all, in a general manner, we ask  
18 you to not regulate us out of business. We are afraid, if  
19 too many of these regulations come in, the real endangered  
20 species might be the farmers that furnish the protein and  
21 food for the world more so than any other country in the  
22 world.

23 In the cattle area our family is from Tattnall  
24 and Evans County, bordering Fort Stewart in both counties.  
25 Many of our friends and families had to move out in the

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1 late '30s and '40s to give the land for our defense to  
2 protect our country. And we are glad to hear of the  
3 probability of programs that will include us in  
4 conservation measures. One of our farms borders Fort  
5 Stewart.

6 But we also live in an area where north of me  
7 they have built a prison on one farm, and south of me they  
8 have used two small farms to put in cemeteries. I don't



9 really know which direction I'm going. But I know we don't  
10 have the building you have in Glynn and Chatham Counties,  
11 but our land is being used.

12 So one quick point I would like to make about  
13 wildlife is the fact that there's a lot of diseases that  
14 are a part of that. And one of the things that we stress  
15 in the cattle industry is to not improve or increase the  
16 feeding of deer where they can be harvested right up with  
17 the feed.

18 In the states of Wisconsin -- I mean Minnesota  
19 and Michigan tuberculosis has had a great outbreak there  
20 and lost their free status in cattle because the deer  
21 population were fed and it spread to the cattle. And we  
22 think of these (unintelligible) diseases and we like to  
23 have the deer around for the hunting rights and the other  
24 things that we can do, but we feel like that this is a  
25 possible threat even to human life. If you have someone

0054

1 that harvests the deer and field-dress it and it has  
2 tuberculosis, what closer contact can you have. And we  
3 have the same feeling there in the animal industry about  
4 the flu that might be transported on some of our migrating  
5 birds.

6 So we ask you to look at these and consult us, as  
7 we can definitely thank you for the support that you have  
8 given in having this Listening Session. I like to go where  
9 people listen.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

11 No. 28?

12 MR. COLLINS: Good afternoon. My name is Jim  
13 Collins. First of all, I would like to thank you for  
14 hosting this event and everyone that is here today. I'm a  
15 fifth-generation cattle producer. My family farm is in  
16 Alabama and Georgia, and I also have the privilege of  
17 working for the Georgia Cattlemen's Association as their  
18 executive.

19 A few things I would like to point out today and,  
20 again, point out that our industry is and continues to be  
21 one of the first conservationists and environmentalists  
22 because it's the nature of the beast of what we do. We  
23 have a business and our industry managers and owns more  
24 pasture land and more cropland -- total cropland in Georgia  
25 than any other ag industry, and that's an awesome

0055

1 responsibility. It's in our best interest to be sure that  
2 that land is in the best health it can possibly be; and  
3 then, also, that directly affects our bottom line in terms  
4 of the health and the productivity of our land.

5 We represent roughly 21,000 operations in the  
6 state. And as Dr. Strickland alluded to, we are  
7 continuously faced with not only the normal economic  
8 challenges of ag production but the challenges that we  
9 face, whether that be on the regulatory end or trying to  
10 continue to adapt as urbanization continues to come into  
11 our area. And our primary focus is taking forage and  
12 ultimately turning that into nutritious lean beef.

13 Mr. Harris alluded to -- and I do want to again

14 publicly thank you on the record -- programs such as EQUIP,  
15 such as some of the partnerships that Georgia Cattlemen's  
16 work with, such as the Grazing Lands Conservation  
17 Coalition, where you have NRCS, cattle industry, dairy  
18 producers, The Nature Conservancy, all around one table  
19 trying to work to solutions. That's where we need to move.  
20 We need to move in the direction of how we can work  
21 together proactively with private landowners to achieve  
22 results.

23 One issue is of concern, and one of the earlier  
24 speakers alluded to, and probably this is the single  
25 biggest concerning issue that has come to my attention is

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1 the proposed discussion from EPA to regulate dust or coarse  
2 particulate matter. This issue is one that, again, there  
3 have been regs on the books for several years, but if you  
4 take that regulation and apply it to an agricultural use,  
5 the reality of what is done on individual days, not  
6 throughout the course of the year as it would be in an  
7 industrial setting, frankly, in many cases may, if not put  
8 our producers out of business but, for sure, put some of  
9 our investors.

10 Georgia is a cow/calf-producing state. We  
11 produce roughly half a million calves each year that are  
12 weaned and go west. Those calves go to our feeding  
13 enterprises, which are our partners. There has been some  
14 evidence if this particular regulation goes into place it  
15 may put anywhere from 35 to 80 percent of that feeding  
16 industry out of business. That has direct impact right  
17 here at home where, as cow/calf operators, we try to work  
18 hand in hand with the environmental industry.

19 So I just would ask you to please share with the  
20 Administration through the Department of Interior and the  
21 other areas this is a huge issue that has far-reaching  
22 implications. And, again, we appreciate you giving us the  
23 opportunity for input. Thanks.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

25 No. 29? 30? 31?

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1 MR. PARSHLEY: I'm Daniel Parshley. I'm Project  
2 Manager for the Glynn Environmental Coalition. I also  
3 administer four EPA technical assistance grants for our  
4 superfund sites here locally.

5 I'd like to start with what works because that's  
6 always most important because it's already working. And I  
7 would like to give credit to our local Fish and Wildlife  
8 office, the Ecological Services Division, and NOAA. They  
9 have been extremely helpful in developing and can help us  
10 identify in developing conservation restoration plans,  
11 particularly in state and county-owned areas where we can  
12 undo some damage to the environment. And, Stan Caldwell,  
13 he should be given some credit. And we are also blessed  
14 with Greg Massey, who is also up nearer to you now. We  
15 have lost some good talent there.

16 But we identified where roads have gone in, cut  
17 off hydrology previously used by (unintelligible). We are  
18 going to restore the hydrology, put some underpasses in and

19 we're really cut down on killing. These are low-cost,  
20 high-yield type projects. The Ecological Services Division  
21 is not funded emphatically. The work that is done is not  
22 being carried through because of lack of funding.

23 On the other hand, I would like to give you an  
24 example of something that is not working. EPA secrecy is a  
25 big problem in our community. We want to know about the

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1 priority ranking for remedial action, and National Remedy  
2 Review Board reviews the Brunswick (unintelligible) site,  
3 orphan site, no responsible party.

4 When our Congressman asked for this information  
5 he said -- he said, just to quote their letter, we can't  
6 give it to you. So this is a huge problem. The secrecy,  
7 no accountability to our congressional representatives;  
8 and, also, it hinders on the local-level planning and any  
9 conservation plans. It's very destructive. Secrecy is the  
10 worst thing.

11 And, also, a problem we have had is the  
12 responsible parties that are the polluters for our  
13 superfund sites writing EPA documents, and we only found  
14 this out through the FOYA process.

15 But partnerships do work, and you can even have  
16 some divisions within, like the EPA, that do well, like the  
17 Environmental Justice Division, to identify our community  
18 as an EJ community. We have a lot of contaminated seafood.  
19 The information was very difficult to understand. And with  
20 the Health Department, Coastal Resources Division, and  
21 Environmental Protection Division, we did a seafood  
22 advisory brochure and helped move people out of  
23 contaminated areas.

24 But, again, the EPA Superfund Division said we  
25 should do some other project; it was terrible; it was bad.

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1 So even within an agency we can have conflict. But these  
2 are what we are encountered with at the community level.  
3 Thank you.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

5 Okay. No. 32?

6 MS. SHEPPARD: Good afternoon and welcome to the  
7 Georgia Coast. I am Deborah Sheppard. I am the Executive  
8 Director of the Altamaha Riverkeeper Organization. We are  
9 charged with protecting -- we are charged with promoting  
10 the enforcement of laws and regulations to protect the  
11 environment throughout our watershed. It's a 14,000-  
12 square-mile watershed. And we recently embarked upon a new  
13 program called the Altamaha Coastkeeper to protect the  
14 coastal areas of Georgia.

15 We could bring any comments to you today, but the  
16 comment that I think is most important to share is that we  
17 are deeply concerned about the growing threat to the  
18 coastal region that is being brought about through the  
19 permitting of development in ecologically-sensitive areas  
20 throughout the coastal region.

21 As you know well from your work throughout the  
22 country, we are experiencing serious climatic changes and  
23 ecological events that make areas such as the low country

24 of Coastal Georgia particularly prone to flooding. And the  
0060

1 negative effects of that are both greatly significant  
2 ecologically and economically.

3 What we are finding in our work is that there are  
4 many circumstances in which development is proceeding in  
5 entirely inappropriate areas and it is being legally  
6 permitted to do so. The common-sense outcome of this is  
7 that when the water comes there will be no place for it to  
8 go, and it will result in both ecological damage and  
9 serious property damage and perhaps catastrophe.

10 We appreciate your attention to this. We have  
11 found the Corps of Engineers to be unresponsive in many  
12 cases when we bring hard evidence to them about areas that  
13 are, in fact, tidally influenced and unwilling to recognize  
14 the need to withhold permitting in some areas that just  
15 shouldn't be developed. So we ask that you pay attention  
16 to that. And thank you again for your presence today.  
17 Thank you.

18 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

19 No. 33? 34? 35?

20 MS. McDONALD: My name is Cindy McDonald. I  
21 reside in Brunswick, Georgia, and today I speak on behalf  
22 of the Jekyll Island Foundation. The Jekyll Island  
23 Foundation is a public 501(c)(3) non-profit that was formed  
24 to support the Jekyll Island Authority in its overall

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1 stewardship of Jekyll Island primarily in historic  
2 preservation, conservation, and education.

3 And I would like to share with you an example of  
4 what we believe to be a very successful conservation  
5 partnership to develop the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, a  
6 facility devoted to the preservation of sea turtles. It  
7 involves the public and private sector and state and  
8 federal agencies.

9 The primary federal agencies that are currently  
10 involved in this partnership are the U.S. EPA Brownsville  
11 Division, to whom we are very grateful for their commitment  
12 of \$200,000 in funding; and to NOAA for a \$50,000 Coastal  
13 Incentive Grant administered by Georgia DNR. We also  
14 receive direct and indirect support from Georgia DNR and  
15 are very appreciative of the strong working relationship  
16 that we have with them. Without your support and the  
17 support of the public and private sector, this facility,  
18 which we believe to be long overdue, would have been many  
19 more years in the making.

20 This conservation partnership provides many  
21 benefits. It addresses the currently state's lack of  
22 facility to provide short and long-term care for injured or  
23 ill sea turtles that arrive on our coast. It has provided  
24 funding for the renewal and cleanup of hazardous material

0062  
1 from an historic site that is located within the National  
2 Historic Landmark District on Jekyll Island.

3 It lays the groundwork for the restoration and  
4 adaptive reuse of the historic 1903 power plant on Jekyll  
5 Island, the future home of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.

6 It provides an opportunity to provide the public with a  
7 very personal and intimate educational experience to learn  
8 about sea turtles, how to protect them, their environment,  
9 and the overall benefits of conservation.

10 It provides a facility for cooperative research  
11 and training between scientists, biologists, veterinarians,  
12 and educational facilities, to name a few. It offers a  
13 venue where year-round field-base study on sea turtles can  
14 be performed. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center represents the  
15 addition of a significant attraction for the coastal region  
16 and thereby provides a positive or will provide a positive  
17 economic benefit.

18 The Jekyll Island Foundation has raised \$2.2  
19 million of the 2.6 needed to develop and outfit this  
20 facility from over 1400 unique sources in 46 states. We  
21 are scheduled to open in June 2007 and we would love to  
22 have you return to our coast for that ceremony.

23 The Jekyll Island Foundation believes that the  
24 Georgia Sea Turtle Center is an excellent example of the  
25 tremendous benefits that result from conservation and

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1 environmental partnerships, and we certainly look forward  
2 to increasing that circle of partners on this project and  
3 any others to come. Thank you.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

5 No. 36? 37? 38? 38?

6 MR. KYLER: 39.

7 MR. MARSHALL: 39. Okay.

8 MR. KYLER: Good afternoon. Thanks for coming  
9 down to the coast. I'm David Kyler, Director of the Center  
10 for Sustainable Coasts, a non-profit organization serving  
11 Coastal Georgia. And I also happen to be president of  
12 Satilla Riverkeeper. And the Satilla Riverkeeper staff and  
13 Gordon Rogers asked me to bring to your attention that he  
14 is (unintelligible) because he had a scheduling conflict  
15 today.

16 I want to talk a little bit about using  
17 indicators, sustainability or environmental indicators,  
18 across as many federal program areas as possible in order  
19 to get better coordination and consistency in federal  
20 actions.

21 Currently actions by federal programs and state-  
22 issued permits administered by federal agencies under  
23 federal law are typically done with little or no data or  
24 analysis that reflects the combined efforts of the multiple  
25 permitted activities. This lack of analysis of cumulative

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1 impact occurs within individual federal programs, but it is  
2 especially troublesome in evaluating decisions among  
3 numerous programs affecting natural resources, as well as  
4 consequential human health and economic prospects  
5 influenced by environmental quality and capacity.

6 These programmed activities include permits  
7 issued by the Corps of Engineers and the Clean Water Act  
8 and the Rivers and Harbors Act, permits issued by state  
9 agencies such as EPD and Coastal Resources in Georgia, and

10 our Federal Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act subject to  
11 EPA oversight, and administration of the Threatened and  
12 Endangered Species Act by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

13 In the absence of comprehensive tracking devices  
14 that account for these many individual permitted  
15 activities, decision-makers continue to issue permits on a  
16 case-by-case basis with inadequate attention given to the  
17 limitations of natural systems or the long-term  
18 implications of multiple-permitted activities.

19 Permitting decisions are made with little or no  
20 insight about the condition of potentially affected natural  
21 resources or the other demands being imposed on the same  
22 ecosystem by existing and/or proposed uses of land, water,  
23 and related resources.

24 Formulation and adoption of appropriate  
25 performance indicators for environmental health and

0065

1 sustainability would be of major benefit in improving the  
2 consistency, comprehensiveness, and accountability of the  
3 federal programs meant to protect and enhance our nation's  
4 natural resources.

5 Furthermore, by including among these indicators  
6 measures of human health related to environmental  
7 conditions, our citizens would be better served by reducing  
8 adverse effects of their exposure to pollutants.

9 To be most effective these indicators should be  
10 developed by a multi-agency group that includes sufficient  
11 levels of authority and representation of those agencies to  
12 ensure commitment to their adoption and use across a wide  
13 range of programs.

14 Ideally to achieve the greatest comprehensive and  
15 consistency in federal policy, agencies involved should  
16 include not only EPA, Fish and Wildlife, National Parks  
17 Service, U.S. Forest Service, and so forth, Corps of  
18 Engineers, but also Coastal Management Program, even  
19 Economic Development --

20 MR. MARSHALL: I'll have to ask you to wrap it up  
21 real quick.

22 MR. KYLER: -- okay -- and Small Business  
23 Administration, among others.

24 The significant advantage in using these is it  
25 brings reliable information to decision makers and it would

0066

1 prevent such egregious examples of the deviant trend to  
2 make policies more political than information-based, such  
3 as defining "freshwater wetlands" to include  
4 (unintelligible) like farm ponds, detention ponds, and even  
5 golf course water hazards, while continuing to allow  
6 genuine functional wetlands to be destroyed by filling and  
7 draining.

8 Such perverse actions serve as an incentive for  
9 dismantling the very natural resource meant to be protected  
10 under Clean Water Act, while rewarding the creation of  
11 artificial landscapes, few if any have the same benefits  
12 and cause a number of adverse impacts, including flooding  
13 that has been described. Thank you.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

15 All right. No. 40?

16 MR. GANE: Good afternoon. My name is Brad Gane.  
17 I'm Assistant Director for Ecological Services with the  
18 Coastal Resource Division of Georgia Department of Natural  
19 Resources. Appreciate y'all coming to the Georgia Coast  
20 today and providing this opportunity to our community to  
21 provide comments to you.

22 My program helps to manage the coastal resources  
23 here in Coastal Georgia. To do so we partner with NOAA  
24 through the Coastal Management Program. Our participation  
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1 with NOAA and the CZM is what I consider to be, in my  
2 opinion, a true partnership.

3 It is voluntary on our part, on the part of the  
4 State of Georgia. And I believe that that's -- it's  
5 voluntary; it's not by federal mandate -- and both parties  
6 are in it for mutual benefit, that is, to further the  
7 federal interests and the state's interests in managing the  
8 coast and to balance resource utilization and economic  
9 development. I believe this is a correct model for federal  
10 government interaction with the states, and I'm glad for  
11 the federal government's technical and financial support.

12 We in Georgia are a latecomer to coastal  
13 management. We have been at it less than 10 years, where  
14 most of the other states have been doing for about 25. And  
15 based on this fact and recent experiences, I asked our  
16 federal partner at OCRM be enabled to balance their efforts  
17 to newer, bigger, and greater efforts with adequately  
18 maintaining the program's foundations mandated by law.  
19 This is important to all the CZM programs in the states and  
20 territories. It will be beneficial to meet the goals of  
21 CZM with a particular interest to our relatively new CZM  
22 program here in Georgia.

23 So we again thank you very much for coming to the  
24 community, your support of our programs, and giving us this  
25 opportunity to show our interest with you.

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1 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

2 Okay. Let's take a real quick break. Let's make  
3 it about 10 minutes. It's 2:45 now. Let's be back in at  
4 five minutes till to begin again.  
5 (Recess from 2:45 p.m. to 2:55 p.m.)

6 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Let's go ahead and get  
7 started. We'll let folks filter back in. They have their  
8 coffee.

9 I wanted to recognize a few folks that have also  
10 come to listen today. You may have noticed there are  
11 various U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service folks, other folks  
12 from federal agencies that are here listening, as well.  
13 And we also have with us Mr. Ron Asbill with Congressman  
14 Jack Kingston's Office; Jerry Bounds with Senator Johnny  
15 Isakson's Office; Michelle Bart with Senator Bill Nelson's  
16 Office; Nick Norman with Senator Mel Martinez's Office; and  
17 Stephen Meeks with Senator Saxby Chambliss' Office.

18 Okay. With that, let's start off where we left  
19 off here, with No. 41. 42? 43? Everyone went home. 44?  
20 45?

21 MS. BARNEYER: Hi. My name is Sarah Barneyer. I  
22 am from Savannah and I represent the Georgia Wildlife  
23 Federation. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you  
24 on cooperative conservation.

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1 The Georgia Wildlife Federation is the state's  
2 oldest and largest member-supported conservation  
3 organization. We represent more than 15,000 members. Of  
4 those members, 40,000 are recognized as hunters and  
5 anglers.

6 Cooperative conservation is important to  
7 protecting listed and potentially listed species and for  
8 managing all wildlife supported by a given habitat. This  
9 type of comprehensive wildlife management is the essence of  
10 the state wildlife grants appropriations which provide the  
11 implementation money for the State Wildlife Action Plan.

12 The Georgia Wildlife Federation has been  
13 intimately involved at all levels of developing Georgia's  
14 State Wildlife Action Plan. Developing this plan was a  
15 cooperative effort involving 14 public meetings with input  
16 from sportsmen's groups, conservation organizations, land  
17 managers, landowners, and public and private research  
18 groups.

19 For the first time in our nation's history we  
20 have selective comprehensive Wildlife Action Plans in place  
21 which provide for cooperative conservation between federal  
22 and state agencies and private landowners. We strongly  
23 support the inclusion of the references to the State  
24 Wildlife Action Plans in the Cooperative Conservation  
25 legislation.

0070

1 We bring to you today a sincere request to join  
2 us in working towards fully funding the State Wildlife  
3 Grants Program. We believe that the current appropriation  
4 should be around \$90 million with substantial increases to  
5 cover the true comprehensive nature of these plans. We  
6 know that the Department of the Interior will be a lead  
7 advocate for increased funding to support implementation of  
8 these plans and advocate for a funding mechanism truly  
9 delegated for this purpose such as leases or other  
10 institutional sources such as the Federal Excise Tax.

11 Full funding of Georgia's State Wildlife Action  
12 Plan and State Wildlife Action Plans nationwide will  
13 support a dramatic move toward another great era in  
14 wildlife conservation by focusing on wildlife species and  
15 habitat before they become endangered. Thank you for the  
16 opportunity to speak today.

17 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

18 No. 46?

19 MR. MILLER: Hello. My name is Bill Miller. I  
20 am a professor at the University of Georgia Department of  
21 Marine Science. I am Director of the Marine Institute on  
22 Sapelo Island. I had the pleasure of meeting Vice Admiral  
23 Lautenbacher when he gave the keynote speech at a birthday  
24 at the University of Georgia last year. So hello again.

0071



1 I had no intention of speaking today, but the  
2 nice lady gave me the card and I saw on the back that it  
3 said how can federal government improve science used in  
4 environmental protection and conservation. And I just  
5 wanted to go on the record to say that there are two items  
6 involved in this.

7 Number one, the science has to exist. So I would  
8 like to go on record to be a strong proponent for the  
9 preservation of basic research programs within the federal  
10 government, be they NOAA, EPA, NASA, NSF, whatever.

11 And the second bit is if that information does  
12 exist and the basic science is out there, it's absolutely  
13 critical that it be used in any kind of conservation  
14 decisions. To use it in conservation decisions, I think,  
15 is important to make sure that there is scientific  
16 representation on many of these cooperative organizations  
17 that are developing and quite nicely starting to  
18 collaborate, cooperate to push forward environmental  
19 agendas.

20 So, number one, keep the money there for basic --  
21 new basic research. Number two, make sure you involve  
22 scientists in the conservation decision-making process.  
23 Thank you, and that's it.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

25 No. 47? 48?

0072

1 MS. MOORER: Hi. My name is Hope Moorer. I'm  
2 Program Manager of Navigation Improvement Projects at the  
3 Georgia Ports Authority, and I thank you for this  
4 opportunity to speak to you.

5 The Authority owns and operates deepwater  
6 terminals here in Brunswick and in Savannah, which is now  
7 the fourth largest container terminal in the nation. I  
8 believe the projects at each of these ports represent ways  
9 that the port industry can function and grow in a manner  
10 that is beneficial to the environment through the  
11 cooperation and collaboration with your agencies.

12 In Savannah U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and  
13 National Marine Fisheries Service, along with EPA, serve as  
14 cooperating agencies on the Savannah Harbor Expansion  
15 Project. Congress conditionally authorized the progress in  
16 1999 to deepen the Savannah River Federal Navigation  
17 Channel up to 48 feet, dependent upon additional  
18 environmental studies and approval of TR2 EIS (phonetic).  
19 We believe that through the involvement of your agencies we  
20 will develop a project that will not only benefit the  
21 nation economically but will enhance the environmental  
22 conditions on the Savannah River.

23 Almost \$28 million has been spent to date on the  
24 studies for this project, representing the most  
25 comprehensive study in the Savannah River Estuary ever

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1 undertaken. Staff members at local and regional levels of  
2 your agencies have been involved in the identification of  
3 the studies and the ongoing work associated with the  
4 project. The EIS will be submitted for public review in  
5 July of next year. Your department's Interior of Commerce

6 will be asked to sign off on this project and the  
7 mitigation plan is put forward. The involvement of your  
8 agencies has been invaluable to get us to this point.

9 We believe this is how such navigation projects  
10 should be done in the future. However, staff resources  
11 will need to be committed by your agencies for such  
12 cooperation to be able to be completed of these projects in  
13 a timely manner.

14 Another topic I would like to mention today is  
15 the protection of the endangered North Atlantic right  
16 whale. The port industry has been involved with NOAA for  
17 years in the efforts to save this species. However, with  
18 recent proposed rule-making a speed restriction of 10 knots  
19 has been selected without involvement of the ports. This  
20 speed is not safe for large vessel movement. I would  
21 request that NOAA work with the port industry to find a  
22 solution that will not only protect the species but will  
23 also be able to be implemented by the port industry.

24 Mr. Hall, I was glad to hear your comments  
25 earlier. It's not the port industry versus fish or versus

0074

1 whales; it's not the ports versus wetlands or habitat. Our  
2 nation survives and thrives through a combination of all  
3 different aspects of the economy, including the enhancement  
4 and enjoyment of the environment. Through collaboration we  
5 can achieve better projects for our future, for our nation.

6 Thank you for the opportunity and I look forward  
7 to working with both of your agencies.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

9 No. 49? 50? 51? 52? 53? 54? Who has the  
10 next number?

11 MR. KEFERL: 55. Thank you for having this  
12 meeting here in Brunswick. My name is Eugene Keferl. I am  
13 from Brunswick, Georgia, and I represent Coastal Georgia  
14 Audubon Society.

15 First of all, I do not believe that we need any  
16 more rules, regulations, and laws. However, I believe that  
17 the Endangered Species Act should be maintained as it is  
18 and not weakened. Any rule or regulation that regulates  
19 wetlands and fresh water should also be strengthened and  
20 not weakened. That's very important.

21 However, one of the things that we need is that  
22 we need the rules and regulations to be properly enforced.  
23 One of the problems of enforcement, I believe, is that  
24 there is not enough money to enforcement. The Department  
25 of the Interior and the Congress cuts the budget, and I do

0075

1 not believe U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is adequately  
2 funded.

3 If you want to have a cooperative effort with the  
4 other agencies with lots of people, you need personnel. It  
5 requires money for personnel. And I don't think there's  
6 enough money to adequately fund the people that protect our  
7 lands as it is and also the rules and regulations. We need  
8 financial incentives for those people who are willing and  
9 able to protect our valuable resources.

10

One of the things I have -- I have spent a great

11 deal of time working in wetlands and rivers throughout the  
12 Eastern United States, and many rules and regulations are  
13 not being followed. There is not enough done to protect  
14 wetlands and fresh water. Freshwater habitats represent  
15 only 2 percent of the entire world, 2 percent. And we all  
16 depend on fresh water. Not enough is being done to protect  
17 it. They are being destroyed faster. If you look at the  
18 endangered species, most of the endangered -- many of the  
19 endangered species are related to fresh water. They live  
20 in fresh water. We need to do that.

21 If you want to get the message out to people,  
22 then you need more personnel. I think that's one of the  
23 main things we need to do here is get more personnel  
24 getting the message to the people to protect the habitat.  
25 Every individual who lives in and on, around fresh water of  
0076

1 any type has a responsibility to protect that. And I  
2 believe that that can only be done by getting the message  
3 out to those people. Thank you very much.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

5 No. 56? 57? 58? 59? 60? 61? 62? And I know  
6 there is no 63, correct?

7 MR. HURLEY: Mr. Hall, Vice Admiral Lautenbacher,  
8 thanks very much for coming and listening to what we have  
9 to say today. I had the pleasure of listening to you on  
10 Earth Day at the Boyd Golf Series, Vice Admiral  
11 Lautenbacher and Mr. Gray talk on revamping and  
12 restructuring your NOAA organization. So thank you for  
13 your attendance and returning to Georgia.

14 My point today is we have heard a lot of people  
15 requesting more funding for issues related to environmental  
16 protection, potentially restoration, and preserving the  
17 sovereignty and the productivity of their natural systems.  
18 My request, conversely, is to approach it from another  
19 angle, and that is potentially decrease funding, decrease  
20 funding for incompatible programs that promote coastal  
21 development. And in this I am referring to the FEMA  
22 regulations.

23 FEMA currently is tacitly supporting, although it  
24 is somewhat regulated by increasing structural requirements  
25 for building. But as a taxpayer, which is my  
0077

1 representation today, just as a federal taxpayer, I would  
2 like to see FEMA restructured in such a manner that is  
3 equitable with the coastal populations.

4 These natural environments and the issues related  
5 to coastal development are the largest environmental issues  
6 in this area and I'm sure on many of the other coastal  
7 wetlands, plains, freshwater wetlands, tidal wetlands found  
8 within the United States. Currently it would seem that  
9 with FEMA in place and my federal tax dollars going towards  
10 the support of a system such as this with the full  
11 knowledge that environmental disturbances and catastrophic  
12 events are going to essentially use that tax money and at  
13 the same time promote environmental degradation, personally  
14 I consider that a double tax. As a taxpaying citizen, I am  
15 not sure which way to turn.

16 I am concerned about the environment. I would  
17 very much like to see conditions made in which the  
18 environmental sovereignty and protection are maintained.  
19 But, at the same time, I don't particularly like having my  
20 tax dollars spent on FEMA programs supporting incompatible  
21 development within these sensitive systems. And I wish you  
22 would take that message back to Capitol Hill with you.  
23 Thank you for the opportunity.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

25 Okay. 64? 65?

0078

1 MS. SHIPMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you for  
2 being here. My name is Susan Shipman, and I am the  
3 Division Director of Coastal Resources Division of Georgia  
4 DNR. And I want to welcome you gentlemen and tell you what  
5 a privilege and an honor it is to have you here in Coastal  
6 Georgia. Welcome and thank you so much.

7 You have heard from many of my colleagues today  
8 with Georgia DNR of many of the successful partnerships and  
9 the value of those partnerships with both Fish and Wildlife  
10 Service and with NOAA Fisheries, as well as NOAA NOS. So  
11 I'm not going to be redundant and review those.

12 I, on the other hand, want to wear my hat as both  
13 the State Administrator who sits on the Regional District  
14 Management Council as well as a state representative and  
15 tell you how much we value the State Federal Marine  
16 Fisheries Management Partnership. Our Council just  
17 concluded our meeting yesterday. They have asked me to  
18 bring you their best regards and to share with you what we  
19 think are a couple of really good partnership stories,  
20 success stories we have going on in the South Atlantic.

21 One is marine protected areas. Yesterday or the  
22 day before, we took action. We are about ready to move  
23 forward the first amendment from a Regional Fishery  
24 Management Council that will establish a network of marine  
25 protected areas in the country, and it will go from North

0079

1 Carolina down through -- at certain sites, of course, but a  
2 series, if you will, of marine protected areas from North  
3 Carolina to the Florida Keys.

4 This has been 16 years in the making. We started  
5 out with a top-down approach. That didn't work. And I  
6 think that speaks to the need and the value of  
7 partnerships, collaboration. This effort, which began  
8 about six years ago, has been a volume-up approach. It has  
9 been very successful. And while I am not here to tell you  
10 everyone is enamored with the areas and the restrictions  
11 that will be imposed if it is approved, certainly we got  
12 more volume than we have ever had before, and that just  
13 speaks to the value of those partnerships.

14 The second item that we have or the second real,  
15 I think, initiative we have going on is to embrace  
16 ecosystem management as our fishery ecosystem plan, and I  
17 believe we are the first council or out front of the other  
18 councils in terms of preparing an ecosystem plan, and that  
19 will be under the leadership of our Vice-Chairman, Duane  
20 Harris, who is here today. We have been working on that

21 for a couple of years. We certainly are engaging all of  
22 the federal agencies, the state partners, and our advisory  
23 panels in that process.

24 So I will leave you with that. I do want to  
25 endorse Dr. Miller's comments for the need for strong,

0080  
1 sound science. Certainly stay the course and increase the  
2 sciences because that is the underpinning of ecosystem  
3 management for sure.

4 So thank you again. We are so glad to have you  
5 here, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.

6 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you.

7 All right. No. 66? 67? Is anyone else planning  
8 to comment?

9 With that, let's go back to Mr. Hall and Admiral  
10 Lautenbacher and do some closing up.

11 MR. HALL: Well, thank you all, especially the  
12 ones that stayed. We really do appreciate it, and your  
13 comments today are very helpful.

14 You know, two or three things sort of came out  
15 that struck me. One of them is the partnerships are  
16 working, but there's always more pressure on the  
17 partnerships than there is people and money to get them  
18 done sometimes. I think that is something that -- don't  
19 take it the wrong way, but I hope it continues, even if we  
20 get more money. If we have more opportunities than we can  
21 still keep up with, that's kind of the way it ought to keep  
22 going.

23 But I can tell you when I started out 25 years  
24 ago that wasn't a problem. We didn't have the kind of  
25 cooperation and partnerships that we have now. Some of you

0081  
1 who have been around that long know that it wasn't that  
2 way. So I think that's really important. I think on the  
3 land is where things happen.

4 And when I think about natural resources and who  
5 has made conservation happen in this country, then you have  
6 to go to the private landowner, you have to go to the  
7 hunters and the anglers, and you have to go to people that  
8 were willing to step up and say, "Tax me." And, you know,  
9 I'll take you back to the '30s when it was the duck hunters  
10 that said, "Tax me; I'll pay for a duck stamp." And then

11 Pittman-Robertson and Wallboro (phonetic) came about and  
12 they said, "Tax me; I'm a hunter; I'll pay that tax."

13 And so you heard from some state folks talking  
14 about those funds. Those two pots of money, not the duck  
15 stamp, the Pittman-Robertson and Wallboro (phonetic), taxes  
16 on your equipment that you buy when you go hunting and  
17 fishing, together they now contributed in real dollars, not  
18 adjustable dollars, over \$10 billion dollars to the states  
19 to help with the fishing and hunting opportunities. The  
20 new programs coming on are really helpful, too.

21 I don't know what the funding situation is going  
22 to be like. I know it's tough for all of us, but we will  
23 keep trying to fight for these things as you have helped  
24 identify them as priorities because that's what important

25 to us.

0082

1 So thank you very much for everything that you do  
2 every day, and there is a lot that you have told us that  
3 you do. And it really makes me feel good to sit in a room  
4 and hear things like that. And all the naysayers that say  
5 it's not working, you know, should have been here to hear  
6 the kinds of things that are. So thank you for what you do  
7 every day.

8 ADMIRAL LAUTENBACHER: Allow me to add my thanks  
9 to all of you who came out today, to the organizers, to the  
10 city for the hospitality in this area. Again, it's a  
11 gorgeous area and it's a delight to be here.

12 There were a number of themes that recurred  
13 throughout the session. It would be too difficult for me  
14 to go through all of them, but I do recognize the strong  
15 emphasis on the partnerships, the strong need to increase  
16 funding, and ensure that things are done in an incentive-  
17 based way, and that we do holistic kinds of things,  
18 ecosystem-based management; humans are important. And I  
19 thought it was a particularly good point to remember all  
20 the people who are not here that we represent and we try to  
21 help, certainly in my mind, as I have worked as a public  
22 servant for many years, as you know.

23 And the other thing that I want to end with, I  
24 guess, is what I have found is that if we talk and work  
25 together we can come to some kind of an agreement and

0083

1 consensus. We can make this work. And so it's an  
2 opportunity for all of us to hear other points of view  
3 today, to be able to do it in a civil and a professional  
4 way. And I encourage all of us -- I certainly want to  
5 encourage and to continue to aid and abet that kind of  
6 cooperation and look forward to working with all of you.

7 And I will say that if everybody that I know in  
8 Washington that works in this Administration, and I know I  
9 speak for Dale, we are passionate advocates for these  
10 programs and we look for ways to get funding; we look for  
11 ways to work with you; we look for ways to improve our  
12 living conditions and our economic and environmental status  
13 together.

14 So, again, thank you all for coming out this  
15 afternoon.

16 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you for coming. The 20th  
17 Cooperative Conservation Listening Session is adjourned.  
18 (Adjourned at 3:20 p.m.)  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER  
2

3 STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF GLYNN

4 I, W. STEPHEN WALKER, CCR B-572, being a Certified Court  
5 Reporter in and for the State of Georgia at large, certify that  
6 the foregoing transcript of the Listening Session of September  
7 st  
8 21 , 2006, held in my presence, is a true, correct and complete  
9 transcription of said meeting.

10 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee  
11 nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties, nor a relative  
12 nor an employee of such attorney or counsel, nor financially  
13 interested in the action.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereby affix my hand and seal on this  
15 th  
16 the 16 day of October 2006.

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